

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama Vows to Fight Oil Spill “With Everything We’ve Got”

By Stephen Kaufman  
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama told Americans his administration will fight the Gulf of Mexico oil spill “with everything we’ve got for as long as it takes,” and that he will tell BP executives to set aside money for an independently administered compensation fund for businesses and workers harmed by the spill. Obama also urged Americans to accelerate the country’s transition to a clean energy economy.

Speaking from the White House in a June 15 prime-time television address, Obama said the spill, caused by an April 20 explosion aboard a BP oil rig, is already “the worst environmental disaster America has ever faced,” with an estimated 30,000 to 65,000 barrels of oil a day continuing to flow from a ruptured drilling well located more than a mile below the ocean surface.

“Because there has never been a leak this size at this depth, stopping it has tested the limits of human technology,” Obama said. BP has been directed to mobilize additional equipment and technology, which Obama said should capture up to 90 percent of the leaking oil. But the leak, Obama said, is not expected to be completely plugged until the company finishes drilling a relief well later in the summer.

The president likened the disaster to “an epidemic ... that we will be fighting for months and even years,” but told Americans: “We will fight this spill with everything we’ve got for as long as it takes. We will make BP pay for the damage their company has caused. And we will do whatever’s necessary to help the Gulf Coast and its people recover from this tragedy.”

Obama called for BP to set aside funding to compensate workers and business owners who have been harmed by the spill. The fund, he said, would be administered by an independent third party. After the president met with BP executives at the White House June 16, he announced that the company had agreed to a \$20 billion escrow account for damage claims. The fund will be administered by Kenneth Feinberg, a lawyer who oversaw compensation for victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Obama said June 16 that the \$20 billion “is not a cap,” and that it will not supersede the rights of individuals or states to present claims in court. The company will remain liable for the environmental disaster it caused, and the president announced that BP had voluntarily agreed to establish a \$100 million fund to compensate oil workers who are being affected by the closure of other deep-water

oil rigs in the Gulf.

“I’m absolutely confident BP will be able to meet its obligations to the Gulf Coast and to the American people. BP is a strong and viable company and it is in all our interests that it remains so. This is about accountability. At the end of the day, that’s what every American wants and expects,” the president said June 16.

The larger lesson of the Gulf oil spill, Obama said in his June 15 address, is that there is an increased risk from drilling for oil as fewer land and shallow wells are available. There also should be increased awareness that oil is a finite resource, he said.

“For decades, we’ve talked and talked about the need to end America’s century-long addiction to fossil fuels. And for decades, we have failed to act with the sense of urgency that this challenge requires. Time and again, the path forward has been blocked — not only by oil industry lobbyists, but also by a lack of political courage and candor,” he said June 15.

The Gulf tragedy “is the most painful and powerful reminder yet that the time to embrace a clean energy future is now,” he said. “Now is the moment for this generation to embark on a national mission to unleash America’s innovation and seize control of our own destiny.”

The transition to a clean energy economy will take time, but if it is accelerated, it “has the potential to grow our economy and create millions of jobs,” he said, urging Americans to rally together for sustainable and independent energy sources.

“We can’t afford not to change how we produce and use energy — because the long-term costs to our economy, our national security and our environment are far greater,” Obama said.

### INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE OFFERS CONTINUE

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley issued a media note June 14 listing 17 countries that had offered assistance as containment and cleanup efforts continue in the Gulf. On June 15, that number grew to 18 nations, as Qatar offered containment boom, he said in the daily press briefing, adding that the International Maritime Organization has also identified sources of boom in Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Israel, Kenya, Norway, Spain and Tunisia.

“So far we have accepted four offers of assistance from Mexico, Norway, the Netherlands, and Canada,” Crowley said June 15, and BP has also been obtaining equipment and technical efforts from around the world.

Crowley said most of the offers to the United States are to sell supplies, and in some cases the Obama administration has held the outstanding offers in abeyance due to its need to first check on whether domestic sources are available, as well as to compare the price of the material to rates on the open market.

### **United States Builds on Iran Sanctions**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner announced new financial measures that target Iran's nuclear and missile programs and bolster recent U.N. Security Council sanctions aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions.

"Today's actions also highlight for the international community Iran's use of its financial sector, shipping industry and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to carry out and mask its proliferation activities," a Treasury Department fact sheet said. The steps respond to the Security Council's call for nations to prevent their financial systems from being abused by Iran.

"We are adding to our list of sanction entities a number of institutions and individuals who are helping Iran finance nuclear and missile programs and to evade international sanctions," Geithner told reporters.

Geithner and Stuart Levey, Treasury's under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, presented the expanded financial measures at a June 16 White House briefing. The European Union also has agreed to move forward on plans for additional measures beyond the Security Council-imposed sanctions approved June 9.

The measures unveiled at the White House block U.S. transactions with listed businesses and banks, and seek to freeze any assets of the entities held in U.S. jurisdiction. An additional impact of U.S. and U.N. measures is that businesses around the world are becoming conscious of the implications of any trade that they conduct with Iran's energy companies, Levey told reporters.

Treasury added Iran's Post Bank for providing financial services to and acting on behalf of Bank Sepah, which was designated by Treasury officials in 2007 for its support of Iran's missile industry, including two companies directly linked to Iran's ballistic missile program — Shahid Bakeri Industries Group and Shaid Hemmat Industries Group. Bank Sepah later was designated by the United Nations in March 2007.

According to the Treasury Department, Post Bank, working on behalf of Bank Sepah, arranged millions of

dollars worth of business between Hong Kong Electronics and other overseas beneficiaries. Hong Kong Electronics was added to the Treasury list in June 2009 for providing support to several North Korean entities; North Korea is also under U.N. Security Council sanction for its nuclear weapons program.

Geithner said that with the addition of Post Bank, it brings the number of Iranian-owned banks on the sanctions list to 16.

"We are adding five front companies and more than 90 ship names that Iran's national maritime carrier has been using to try to evade sanctions," Geithner said. Treasury is also adding two individuals and two entities that are actively involved in Iran's nuclear and missile programs.

The new sanctions were imposed against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' air force and missile commands, which are key elements in the operational deployment of Iran's ballistic missile capability. Also added to the sanctions list were Rah Sahel and Sepanir Oil and Gas Engineering Company, Treasury said.

Geithner said Treasury added 22 petroleum, energy and insurance companies, inside and outside Iran, that are owned or controlled by the Iranian government.

Levey said additional sanctions were imposed against Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) and front companies.

"Since we first sanctioned IRISL in 2008, it has desperately attempted to evade those sanctions, setting up new front companies, renaming and reflagging and even repainting its vessels to hide their true ownership," Levey said. "Despite its deceptive maneuvers, IRISL has had to struggle to obtain insurance and other services that it needs."

House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Howard L. Berman issued a statement supporting Treasury's new designations.

"I strongly support today's action by the Treasury Department to designate dozens of Iranian entities and individuals as contributors to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," Berman said. "These designations will significantly extend the reach of comprehensive Iran sanctions legislation that Congress will soon pass, reinforcing and augmenting the international sanctions regime so that we can achieve our goal of persuading Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment program, in accordance with the demands of the international community."

Levey said that if the Iranian government holds to previous patterns, it will attempt to find ways to work

around these additional measures, “hiding behind front companies, doctoring wire transfers, falsifying shipping documents. We will continue to expose this deception.”

## Two Who Battle Hunger Win 2010 World Food Prize

*Secretary Clinton announces new agricultural research initiative*

By Kathryn McConnell  
Staff Writer

Washington — Two leaders of grass-roots organizations fighting global hunger and poverty have been named winners of the 2010 World Food Prize.

Jo Luck, president of Heifer International, and David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, will accept the prize at an international symposium in Des Moines, Iowa, on October 14, said Kenneth Quinn, president of the World Food Prize Foundation, which gives the award. The World Food Prize was founded in 1986 by Norman E. Borlaug, recipient of the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for his work in agricultural research.

In honoring Luck and Beckmann, the World Food Prize recognizes “the critical efforts of nongovernmental organizations in mobilizing and empowering grass-roots citizens to combat hunger and poverty,” Quinn said.

Heifer International is based in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Bread for the World in Washington.

“This year’s honorees have addressed hunger in innovative ways, engaging millions of people at home and abroad. Their contributions are critical,” Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said at the June 16 announcement ceremony in the Benjamin Franklin Room of the State Department, which was packed with diplomats, leaders from agriculture and development, and members of Congress.

Clinton has emphasized food security and development since becoming the secretary of state.

“In a few decades, the world’s population will grow to 9 billion people. If we are to feed the future without leveling the forests, draining the aquifers, and depleting the soil of all its nutrients, we need science,” Clinton said.

In addition to praising Luck and Beckmann, the secretary of state announced a new agricultural research initiative called the Norman Borlaug Commemorative Research Initiative, “to leverage the work of our nation’s scientists to benefit farmers in developing countries worldwide.”

The initiative is part of the Obama administration’s new Feed the Future strategy and will involve the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Agency for

International Development, U.S. universities, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, private U.S. and international companies and research organizations in developing countries. Clinton said the administration will ask Congress for a significant increase in funding for agricultural research for fiscal year 2011. In 2009, Obama pledged to double U.S. support for global agriculture.

JO LUCK

“Without sustenance, people are not able to address other issues,” Luck said. “For me, ending hunger is a prerequisite for peace.”

As Heifer International’s president, Luck has built the organization into a leading nonprofit organization. The group gives livestock, seeds and agricultural training to families throughout the world. The gifts are purchased by Heifer with money it raises through private donations — mostly from individuals and community groups.

The idea behind Heifer’s unusual program is that animals and crops provide more than nutritious food. When a crop yields more grain or an animal produces more milk than a family needs, the extra can be sold to provide income for home improvements, medical care or school tuition. Families that receive livestock agree to pass on its first-born female offspring to another family, spreading the benefits of the original gift to the larger community.

Similarly, if families receive agricultural training, they commit to train other farmers. If they receive seeds, they promise to give away a portion of their first seedlings to another family.

Since its founding more than six decades ago, Heifer has provided livestock and agricultural training to more than 12 million families in more than 125 countries.

DAVID BECKMANN

David Beckmann leads Bread for the World, a U.S. advocacy group that urges lawmakers to support policies that target hunger, poverty and disease. He organizes more than 250,000 voters each year to contact their congressional representatives, and his organization takes some credit for the fact that Congress has tripled funding for poverty-focused development assistance during the past decade.

“Our colleagues in developing countries are encouraged by what we’re doing,” Beckmann said. “I hope the World Food Prize will inspire more people to get involved.”

In Mozambique, Beckmann said, he saw the effects of Bread for the World’s advocacy. In a remote village in the north, he said, “a decade ago there were no schools.” But



with U.S. aid reaching the area, today, “nearly all the children go to school, including AIDS orphans.” Furthermore, he said, a new village pump is saving women long daily walks to the closest lake to get water for their families.

Since 1986, the World Food Prize has recognized individuals who have made breakthrough achievements in improving the quality, quantity and availability of food throughout the world. It has been given to 31 people from all over the world who work in areas like plant breeding, soil science, early childhood nutrition, livestock health and famine relief, microcredit and the role of women in development.

### **Anti-Trafficking Successes in Africa Offer Hope to Continent**

*Nigeria, Mauritius rank in top tier in 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report*

By Jane Morse  
Staff Writer

Washington — Judged on tier ranking, a look at the map of Africa in the 2010 Trafficking in Persons Report reveals that most of the countries there are struggling in the battle to end human trafficking.

But two countries stand out: Nigeria and Mauritius. Both should serve as models for other countries seeking to end modern-day slavery, according to Luis CdeBaca, ambassador-at-large for the State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

The State Department’s annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report tracks to what extent governments worldwide comply with the standards identified in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), a U.S. law adopted in 2000 that seeks to prevent human trafficking overseas. Countries are given a tier ranking. At the bottom are Tier 3 countries that have governments that do not comply with the minimum standards of the TVPA and are not making significant efforts to do so. Five countries in Africa have received Tier 3 status in this year’s TIP report.

Most of the countries in Africa, however, have received Tier 2 or Tier 2 Watch List rankings. Their governments are attempting to meet TVPA minimum standards but do not yet fully comply (Tier 2). Or, the governments, while attempting to comply with minimum TVPA standards, fall short and suffer from a significant and/or increasing incidence of severe forms of trafficking (Tier 2 Watch List).

Nigeria and Mauritius are in Tier 1, with governments that fully comply with the TVPA minimum standards.

The two countries are very different in terms of their size and legal systems, and yet both serve as beacons of hope to other countries grappling with the problem of human trafficking.

Mauritius, a tiny island 800 kilometers (500 miles) east of Madagascar, has a population of just more than 1.2 million people. For years it languished on Tier 2 and suffered as a destination country for victims of human trafficking.

“When you’re talking about these small island countries,” CdeBaca told America.gov in a recent interview, “you’re talking about clusters of victims — dozens rather than hundreds. ... It’s very easy, I think, for small island nations to look at the trafficking thing and think that it doesn’t apply to them because the numbers are smaller.” Nonetheless, every country has a responsibility under international law to address the problem, he said.

Mauritius was able to muster a “combination of political will and then a willingness to go out and find enforcement models that would work there,” CdeBaca said. A former French colony with a civil law background, Mauritius should serve as a model for smaller countries, he said.

“Mauritius has actually done a very good job of having those standard operating procedures in place — knowing that they’re not going to get hundreds of victims a year, they’re going to get less than 20 in a given year,” CdeBaca said. “But when they do find them, they know what to do with them, and they know how to treat them right.”

Nigeria, a much larger country with a population of some 148 million, suffers from being a source country for victims of human slavery. It, too, spent years on the Tier 2 list in the TIP report.

“Nigeria was well on its way to being on Tier 3 in the report, plagued, as in many countries, by corruption and weak rule of law,” CdeBaca said. “But they worked with the American Bar Association; they worked with UNODC [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime]; they worked with us [U.S. Agency for International Development]; they aggressively went out and found best practices.”

With the creation of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), CdeBaca said, all the involved parties were brought together and held accountable. “You’ve seen success,” he said of Nigeria’s efforts. “So it is something that I’d like to see replicated and scaled outside of just Nigeria.”

Abject poverty and lack of governing structures can be blamed for the prevalence of many social ills, CdeBaca

said. "What is interesting is a lot of social problems go away as gross domestic product rises; a lot of things go away as governments become more set up. And yet, human trafficking is prevalent in all of the countries."

When asked about notions of "hereditary slavery" and "slave castes" in some countries of West Africa, CdeBaca replied: "There's been some progress in West Africa on the issue of hereditary slavery, although it's slow in coming. As was reflected in last year's trafficking report, we've seen some people ordered emancipated from their hereditary slave owners who received some money settlements."

"But at the end of the day, we have to not only change the cultural practice, we also have to call upon the governments to impose the rule of law and to comply with Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which says no person shall be held as a slave," CdeBaca said. "At some point it stops being culture and it starts being a crime. And with slavery, it's not that hard of a decision to make."

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